

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 00176 01 OF 02 131504Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 AID-01
/030 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6625

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 0176

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, ES

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY REPORT ON VISIT OF CONGRESSMAN FATHER
ROBERT DRINAN

REF: STATE 310759

SUMMARY. CONGRESSMAN DRINAN VISITED EL SALVADOR FROM JANUARY 7-12 ON QTE PRIVATE VISIT UNQTE FINANCED BY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE (UUSC) FOR PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATING HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. CONGRESSMAN ACCOMPANIED BY JOHN MCAWARD OF UUSC AND DR. THOMAS ANDERSON. AT DEPARTMENT AND CONGRESSMAN'S REQUEST, EMBASSY ARRANGED INTERVIEWS WITH PRESIDENT ROMERO, VICE-PRESIDENT ASTACIO, MINISTER OF JUSTICE FLORES Y FLORES, AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR GEFFRAL ROJAS. EMBASEK ALSO PROVIDED 2 AND 1/2 HOUR BRIEFING FOR CONGRESSMAN AND ASSOCIATES AMBASSADOR HOSTED SMALL LUNCHEON. MCAWARD ARRANGED EXTENSIVE SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH ARCHBISHOP ROMERO, PRIESTS, NUNS, OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS, LABOR LEADERS, CAMPESINO GROUPS AND INFORMAL PRESS CONFERENCE. CONGRESSMAN DRINAN AND ASSOCIATES DEPARTED MORNING JAN. 12 OBVIOUSLY CONVINCED THAT WIDESPREAD REPRESSION AND DENIAL OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY IN AREA OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION, ARE AS PREVALENT TODAY UNDER ROMERO ADMINISTRATION IF NOT MORE SO THAN UNDER PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. CONGRESSMAN DRINAN STATED PUBLICLY
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PAGE 02 SAN SA 00176 01 OF 02 131504Z

AT PRESS CONFERENCE JANUARY 11 THAT RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION, PARTICULARLY IN RURAAL AREA OF EL SALVADOR, MORE SUBTLE THAN UNDER PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION BUT CAMPESINOS LIVING IN CONSTANT FEAR AND GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS STILL BEING PERPETRATED. CONGRESSMAN CAN BE EXPECTED TO REPEAT THESE OBSERVATIONS AT PRESS CONFERENCE SCHEDULED IN WASHINGTON JAN. 13.
END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL INFORMED EMBASSY OF PRIVATELY FINANCED VISIT OF CONGRESSMAN FATHER ROBERT DRINAN AND REQUESTED EMBASSY TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS WITH MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF AND HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS OF GOES. SAME DAY REFTEL RECEIVED JAN. 3), JOHN MCAWARD, AN OFFICIAL OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE WHICH SPONSORED CONGRESSMAN'S VISIT, ARRIVED AT EMBASSY AND HAD TWO HOUR DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR, DCM AND POLITICAL OFFICER. MCAWARD STATED WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS THAT CONGRESSMAN WISHED TO INVESTIGATE.

2. MCAWARD, ASSISTED BY ARCHBISHOP AND HIS STAFF, ARRANGED SERIES OF APPOINTMENTS AND MEETINGS FOR CONGRESSMAN WITH NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS (ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION OPPOSING PRESENT GOES).

3. EMBASSY ARRANGED APPOINTMENTS WITH GOES OFFICIALS AND EMBASSY BRIEFING. FOLLOWING IS SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS AND MEETINGS FINALLY HELD BY CONGRESSMAN DURING HIS VISIT. ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS AND OVERALL IMPACT OF CONGRESSMAN'S VISIT ON GOES-U.S. RELATIONS FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7 - CONGRESSMAN DRINAN, ACCOMPANIED BY DR. THOMAS ANDERSON (WHO REPEATEDLY STATED HIS ONLY ROLE WAS THAT OF REPORTER FOR MEETINGS), ARRIVED 6:15 P.M. VIA PAN AM FLIGHT 503. CONGRESSMAN V
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 00176 01 OF 02 131504Z

T BY CONTROL OFFICER MITCHELL ACCOMPANIED BY JOHN MCAWARD. GOES EXTENDED ALL DIPLOMATIC COURTESIES TO CONGRESSMAN AND ANDERSON. CONGRESSMAN AND PARTY DRIVEN TO HOTEL IN EMBASSY VEHICLE AND CONGRESSMAN INFORMED CONTROL OFFICER THAT HE WOULD REQUIRE NO FURTHER ASSISTANCE UNTIL SCHEDULED BRIEFING BY AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY OFFICERS MONDAY, JANUARY 9. CONGRESSMAN AND ASSOCIATES HAD FOUR HOUR MEETING WITH ARCHBISHOP AND OTHER MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC HIERARCHY EVENING OF ARRIVAL.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 - CONGRESSMAN CONCELEBRATED MASS WITH ARCHBISHOP ROMERO AT CATHEDRAL IN SAN SALVADOR. MASS WAS ATTENDED BY CLOSE TO 1,000 PEOPLE AND BROADCAST ON NATIONWIDE RADIO NETWORK.

10 A.M. - CONGRESSMAN MET WITH "COMMITTEE OF MOTHERS AND FAMILIES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS". ALSO HELD AT CATHEDRAL.

12:30 - CONGRESSMAN AND PARTY HAD LUNCH HOSTED BY COFFEE GROWER AND FRIEND OF ANDERSON, LEONEL GOMEZ.

5 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN VISITED URBAN SQUATTER SETTLEMENT

IN SAN SALVADOR ACCOMPANIED BY CATHOLIC PRIESTS.

8 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN MET WITH AMERICAN PRIESTS AND NUNS
SERVING IN EL SALVADOR.

MONDAY, JANUARY 9

10 A.M. - CONGRESSMAN AND ASSOCIATES BRIEFED BY AMBASSADOR
AND MEMBERS OF COUNTRY TEAM. BRIEFING LASTED 2 AND 1/2
HOURS. NOTE: QUITE APPARENT FROM NATURE OF CONGRESSMAN'S
QUESTIONS THAT HE WAS ALREADY CONVINCED THAT WIDE-SCALE
REPRESSION OF CATHOLIC CHURCH TAKING PLACE IN EL SALVADOR.

1 PM. - LUNCH AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE WITH AMBASSADOR, DCM,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAN SA 00176 01 OF 02 131504Z

POLITICAL OFFICER, CONGRESSMAN, MCAWARD, ANDERSON AND TWO SALVADORANS
OF UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS. SALVADORANS EXPRESSED DIRE NEED FOR
INDUSTRIALIZATION FOR EL SALVADOR AND INCREASE OF MIDDLE-CLASS
SOCIETY. BOTH CONTENTED THAT PROGRESS CAN BE MADE IN AREAS OF
HUMAN RIGHTS AND IMPROVEMENT OF SALVADORANS IN GENERAL UNDER
PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE, WHILE WORKING PATIENTLY WITH
YOUNGER MILITARY OFFICERS. OPENLY ADMITTED CHANGES WERE RE-
QUIRED BUT SUCH CHANGES WOULD TAKE TIME, AND PLEADED FOR PATIENCE.

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 00176 02 OF 02 131512Z
ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 AID-01
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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6626

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 0176

3:30 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN AND ASSOCIATES MET WITH LEADERS

OF OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES (PDC, MNR, UDN) AT HOME OF
DR. UNGO, PRESIDENT OF MNR.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10

8 A.M. - CONGRESSMAN, MCAWARD, ANDERSON, ACCOMPANIED
BY AMERICAN PRIEST, VISITED EL PAISNAL, AGUILARES, AND OTHER
AREAS IN COUNTRYSIDE WHERE THERE HAD BEEN PREVIOUS INCIDENTS
INVOLVING BOTH CLERGY AND CATECHNISTS OF CATHOLIC CHURCH.
CONGRESSMAN STATED SUBSEQUENTLY THAT HE HAD TALKED TO LARGE
NUMBERS OF CAMPESINOS, ALL OF WHOM LIVED INFEAR OF GOVERNMENT
PERSECUTION AND REPRESSION OF THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

5 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN AND AMBASSADOR HAD ONE HOUR MEETING
WITH PRESIDENT ROMERO AT PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. MEETING WAS NOT
CONGENIAL.

6 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN, MCAWARD, ANDERSON, AMBASSADOR
AND POLTIICAL OFFICER HAD ONE HOUR MEETING WITH VICE-PRESIDENT
JULIO ASTACIO. THIS MEETING IN ENGLISH AND VICE-PRESIDENT
WAS VISIBLY SHAKEN BY CHARGES OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AND FORCE-
FULNESS OF CONGRESSMAN'S PRESENTATION AND QUESTIONS IN AREA
OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAN SA 00176 02 OF 02 131512Z

9 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN CELEBRATED MASS FOR GROUP OF APPROX-
IMATELY 50 CAMPESINOS AT UNSPECIFIED LOCATION (PRESUMABLY NEAR
AGUILARES). MASS WAS CONDUCTED IN COMPLETELY CLANDESTINE
FASHION WHICH CONGRESSMAN SUBSEQUENTLY STATED ONLY MANNER
IN WHICH CAMPESINOS IN THAT AREA FEEL CAN MAINTAIN RELIGIOUS
AFFILIATION.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11

9 A.M. - CONGRESSMAN AND ASSOCIATES MET IN ARCHBISHOPIC
OF SAN SALVADOR WITH APPROXIMATELY 20 MEMBERS OF SALVADORAN LABOR
MOVEMENT. LABOR SPOKESMAN MAINTAINED THAT TRADE UNION
RIGHTS DO NOT REALLY EXIST IN EL SALVADOR AND WORKERS'
RIGHTS NOT BEING PROTECTED BY MINISTRY OF LABOR AND LABOR JUDGES.
LABOR LEADERS COULD NOT, HOWEVER, PRESENT NAMES OF ANY LABOR
OR UNION MEMBER HAVING BEEN IMPRISONED UNDER ROMERO ADMINIST-
RATION.

11 A.M. - CONGRESSMAN AND ASSOCIATES MET WITH DR. JOSE GONZALEZ,
DIRECTOR OF ANTI-GOES NEWSPAPER LA CRONICA.

2:30 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN, MCAWARD, ANDERSON AND POLITICAL
OFFICER MET WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE FLORES Y FLORES AND SUBSEC-
RETARY OF JUSTICE GARCIA PRIETO AT MINISTRY. MINISTER PROVIDED

CONGRESSMAN WITH TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS NOW IN PENITENTIARIES AND LISTS OF ARRESTS MADE BY NATIONAL GUARD IN MONTH OF DECEMBER. COULD NOT PROVIDE ARRESTS MADE BY NATIONAL POLICE OR OTHER ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES SINCE THESE DO NOT FALL UNDER HIS JURISDICTION. THIS MEETING COULD BE CATEGORIZED AS ANTAGONISTIC.

3:45 - CONGRESSMAN, MCWARD, ANDERSON AND POLITICAL OFFICER MET WITH MINISTER OF INTERIOR GENERAL ROJAS AND HIS SUBSECRETARY. THIS MEETING GENERALLY PLEASANT EXCHANGE AND MINISTER CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAN SA 00176 02 OF 02 131512Z

PROMISED CONGRESSMAN TO LOOK INTO MATTERS SUCH AS OPENING OF MAIL BY GOES OF JESUITS, MULTIPLE-ENTRY VISAS FOR PRIESTS, AND RETURN OF PRIESTS EXPELLED FROM EL SALVADOR PRIOR TO ROMERO ADMINISTRATION.

5 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN AND ASSOCIATES HELD PRESS CONFERENCE AT EL CAMINO REAL HOTEL ATTENDED BY APPROXIMATELY 15 JOURNALISTS. MAJORITY OF STATEMENTS AT CONFERENCE PRINTED BY LA PRENSA GRAFICA MORNING JANUARY 12. UIS HAS FORWARDED TRANSCRIPT OF ENTIRE CONFERENCE BY CABLE.

6:30 P.M. - CONGRESSMAN, MCWARD, AND ANDERSON MET WITH AMBASSADOR,

DCM AND POLITICAL OFFICER AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE FOR 1 AND 1/2 HOUR WRAP-UP DISCUSSION OF CONGRESSIONAL VISIT.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 12 - CONTROL OFFICER TOOK CONGRESSMAN AND PARTY TO AIRPORT WHERE THEY DEPARTED 9:20 A.M. ON PAN AM FLIGHT 503, FOR GUATEMALA AND MIAMI.
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Message Attributes

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